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Speeches, The State of Our Foreign Relations

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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THE STATE OF OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS

Address of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

58th Annual Session of the
Inland Empire Education Association

Spokane, Washington
April 8, 1960

An invitation such as you extended to me is an invitation to come home. It is an invitation to think through old questions in the fresh but familiar perspective of this wonderful part of the nation.

Of these questions, that of foreign relations is most compelling. As Americans, we need to understand the problems of foreign relations because none of us escapes their consequences. As teachers--I am still one of you although my membership in the club has temporarily lapsed--as teachers, we need not only to understand these problems but also to stimulate the capacity of others to understand them. We need especially to convey something of their meaning to the young people who must live in the world which our foreign policies now are doing much to shape.

Let me say, at the outset, that foreign relations are not the products of alchemy. They are the consequences of human acts. As such they are not beyond normal human comprehension. To be sure, the conduct of foreign relations is largely in the hands of specialists and that is as it should be. But in a nation such as ours, the work of these specialists needs the understanding and broad guidance of our people if it is to be done most effectively.

Foreign relations arise because each nation in the world, as it comes into contact with others, has its hopes, its interests, its fears. Each expresses these national drives in its foreign policy. If the policy is effective, it advances the hopes and interests of a nation, not at the expense of others, but by the process of reconciliation and accommodation. In so doing, it mitigates the fears on all sides. In so doing, it acts for peace.

To put it briefly, an effective foreign policy is one which serves national needs in a complex world, a world of many nations and many needs, by methods other than those of the jungle.

How do we grasp the essence of these matters? How do we convey an understanding of them to others? These are questions which have preoccupied me for some time, particularly in anticipation of this meeting with you who are specialists in the process of understanding the complex and helping others to learn to understand it.

It seems to me that we do not begin to appreciate the dimensions of the problems of foreign relations, if we employ as yardsticks such familiar terms as isolationism or internationalism. These are ambiguities of the past and they do not help us in the present. As far as isolationism is concerned, I think that, as a nation, we have long since recognized the impracticability of a policy designed to insulate ourselves or even

the Western Hemisphere from the massive currents which flow through the world and the storms which beset it. The military conflicts, three in the lifetime of some of us, have dispelled the illusion of isolation. As a more recent reminder, if any is needed, I call to your attention the Soviet test rocket which dropped into the Pacific some weeks ago. It landed about an hour after it had left a launching pad almost 8,000 miles away.

I do not think it is necessary to labor the point. It is clear that, for better or for worse, we are in and of this world or, in these days of space exploration, perhaps I should say in and of this universe. It is obvious that it will be for worse rather than better if we close our eyes to that fact or try to pull the cover over our heads to shut out that fact.

I do not say that the urge to isolationism, this urge to escape from reality is gone entirely from the nation. It is there to some degree but it is no longer the principal source of our difficulties in foreign relations. The present problems come more, I believe, from a rather widespread belief that all which is classifiable as internationalism has, per se, a special claim to virtue.

The fact is there are no panaceas in an indiscriminate embrace of internationalism anymore than there is escape in isolationism. That is the point I wish to stress most strongly. Let me illustrate it by a

story which, since you are teachers, may shock you but a story whose meaning will not be lost on you. As teachers we know, I think, better than most, of the immense value to our relations with other nations, of improving our abilities in foreign languages. In recent years, the teaching profession has given great emphasis to the study of languages and the government has taken steps to encourage it. That is a most desirable development. What we may overlook in our present enthusiasm for this great tool, however, is that it is only a tool. It is not a fool-proof guarantee of effective foreign relations. The story with which I wish to illustrate the point is that of an American diplomat in Latin America some years ago. He made public statements which did a great deal of damage to our relations with that part of the world. Yet he spoke these statements in perfect Spanish of which he was a master. The Latin Americans were astounded by his knowledge of Spanish. They were even more astounded and, in addition, were infuriated by what he said in Spanish. Obviously, here was a case where our relations might well have profited from someone with rather less capability of communicating in that language.

As it is with languages, so it is with policies of internationalism in general. It by no means follows that if five American military bases abroad are helpful, ten will be doubly helpful. It by no means follows that an aid-program which costs \$5 billion a year will be 5 times more useful than a program which costs \$1 billion. It by no

means follows that if 20 American representatives are doing an effective job in a country in Asia, 200 representatives will increase the effectiveness by a factor of 10. It by no means follows that each additional agency added to the United Nations system will increase the total contribution which that useful system makes to peace. In short, in any category of action, not excluding international action, it is possible not only to go beyond the point of diminishing returns but even to the point of increasing loss.

What I am suggesting, then, is that we need to divest ourselves of the notion that all policies, all acts automatically are to be sanctioned if they are classifiable under the general heading of internationalism. There can be illusions no less misleading, no less dangerous to the hopes and interests of the nation in this generalization than those which appeared at an earlier time in the guise of isolationism.

The basic problem of maintaining effective foreign relations and of building peace, insofar as we can contribute to it, lies not so much in more policies or more machinery but in giving fresh direction to existing policies and in refining the machinery by which these policies are now pursued. If we would meet this problem we need, first, to see the world as it is. We need to see it as it is now, before we can reasonably hope to see it as we should like it to be. We need to see our present policies as they are, rather than as we imagine them to be.

No illusion in our present understanding of the world is more misleading than that which assumes that there has been peace since a truce was signed in Korea in 1953. To equate the present situation in that country or, indeed in most parts of the world with peace, may well be to equate it with the period of 1940 in Europe, the period of the so-called "Phony War" just prior to the German drive into the Lowlands and France or with the state of Japanese-American relations on the eve of Pearl Harbor.

If it is enough to define peace as the immediate absence of gun-fire then I suppose the present world-situation, on the whole, may be so regarded. But if peace means to you what it means to me, a reasonable assurance that the young people whose education is now in your charge shall have an opportunity through that education to develop their potentialities and to grow into constructive maturity without the ever-present prospect of sudden and immense devastation being visited upon them, then the present situation cannot be defined as peace. We have a long way to go to peace. To create the illusion that we have already arrived at it is to do a grave disservice to the nation. That, may I say, is one of the principal dangers of goodwill tours and meetings at the summit, whatever advantages they may offer.

We shall not achieve peace by studying the applause meters or the comparative Hooper ratings of Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Eisenhower in India or France or wherever else they may visit. The road to peace does not lie in the winning of international popularity contests. Rather, it lies in the reduction of the fears which push nations and systems of nations towards military clash. It lies in a frank recognition of conflicting national interests and ideological hopes and, if they cannot be reconciled at this time, in turning them away from the channels which lead to the nuclear destruction of a recognizable civilization in the world.

If we scan the principal regions of the world we shall be able to discern quickly that there is no peace in this sense, but, instead, a series of points of potential conflict. In the Far East, these points are to be found in Korea, in the Formosan Straits and in Indo-China. In each of these areas, a truce written or unwritten prevails. The Truce conceals but it does not heal the ideological and political divisions which plague the Korean people, the Chinese people, and the people of Viet Nam and Laos. In the case of Korea, the 38th parallel is still guarded 24 hours a day on both sides. In the Formosan Straits, Chinese communist guns fire from the mainland at the outpost islands of the nationalists--at Quemoy and Matsu--every other day. In Indo-China--in Laos--there was a narrow escape from a large-scale conflict just a few months ago and the situation remains unstable. In Viet Nam a rigid division separates the communist north from the free south and shows no signs of closing in peace.

In short, throughout the Far East, there exists, in excess, one of the most common precipitants of war--unnatural political divisions of peoples who are in reality deeply united by culture, by geography and by history. I shall not review the circumstances which brought about the divisions. All of them, to be sure, are overlaid with the ideological schism between communism and freedom. But each division, too, has its own local characteristics. It is to these characteristics no less than to the broader ideological question which we must look if there is ever to be a full understanding of the situations and, hence, a chance for them to evolve in the direction of a stable peace. That refinement of the problem in policy has yet to begin.

Until it begins, a basis does not exist upon which to proceed towards peace. Any suggestion that our policies have actually produced peace in these areas is gravely misleading. It obscures the problems which sooner or later, may well engulf in conflict not only those peoples immediately involved but the world and ourselves as a part of it.

What our policies have done so far is to buy time in the Far East. We have spent billions through the deployment of our own armed forces in that region and through aid-programs to hold the line against a communist advance. Thousands of American and other lives were sacrificed to the same end in Korea. But I repeat: all we have done so far is to buy time in the Far East.

If we look elsewhere in Asia, to China, we find still another common cause of conflict. We find a nation recently revived from a long slumber which had been induced by an inner decay and by outer pressures upon it, now being revived under the forced draft of a militant totalitarianism. This revived China tests its new found strength in an aggressive and brutal probing into territories of its neighbors. The China of today is a China which is vastly different--so far as we can judge, for our information is all second-hand--from the China to which we were allied during World War II. It is a China in which tens of millions of young people are coming of age with no direct knowledge of Americans but with an induced hatred of this country and its institutions.

Let no one underestimate the long-range effect of these years of animosity between ourselves and China. It is, to say the least, illusory to talk of peace while the animosity is present in virulent form. It is illusory to talk of peace with a China on the march, not in the paths of progress by accommodation with other nations but in the ancient way of Empire under a canopy of modern totalitarian trappings. I do not say that this development--this emergence of a new and bristling China--in the heart of Asia must lead inevitably to war. I do say that I see little in it or in our policies with respect to it which warrants the assumption that we are at peace.

Moving westward to the Middle East, here, too, we find a situation which by no stretch of the imagination can be identified as peace. Rather, it is a situation of suspended war. On repeated occasions in the past, the suspension has all but ended in grave border clashes. On two occasions, at the time of the Suez crisis and in connection with the Lebanon crisis, the world dangled with one foot over the brink of disaster. Our political intervention at the United Nations in connection with the Suez crisis may have forestalled a total collapse in the Middle East. Our military intervention in Lebanon may have had the same effect. But communist penetration of that area--economic and political--has not been curbed nor has a basis for peace been established.

The Eisenhower doctrine on the Middle East was intended to help achieve both objectives. So, too, have the enormous sums of public funds which have been spent on various kinds of aid to that area. Yet both have proved remarkably ineffective.

It is conceivable that we may have helped to hold back the floodwaters of conflict in that region by our acts of intervention and by our aid, but we have done little if anything to disperse or to rechannel them constructively. And behind the barriers which our policies have tried to build, the flood-waters are accumulating in a dangerous fashion. Each outbreak in the Middle East appears less controllable than its predecessor. In these circumstances it is, to say the least, illusory to talk of peace.

If there is grave instability in the Middle East, the same is true for Africa. New forces are at work in that continent which we are just beginning to recognize in policy, let alone understand.

For decades Africa was preponderantly a region acted upon rather than a region which acted in international relations. Since the end of World War II, however, 7 new nations have come into being in Africa. This year, an additional 5 are scheduled to achieve independence and more will follow in due course. This enormous and rapid political change alone is sufficient to bring about massive problems of readjustment. But it is not only a political upheaval which rumbles through that great continent. Other forces common to all the underdeveloped nations, from Eastern Asia to Latin America, are felt no less strongly in Africa. The urge is there, for human equality and for a continuing and rapid modernization, with its promise of economic and social benefit to all peoples. The urge is there, but the means to satisfy it adequately in peace have yet to be devised either by the Africa nations themselves or in concert with others.

Again, Africa is in danger of being more acted upon rather than acting itself in international affairs as it finds itself increasingly the focal point of rival ideologies and systems. This competition for African favor may be flattering to the Africans for the moment but

it contains accumulating dangers to them and to peace. The dangers will be curbed only as Africa, increasingly, finds its own way in the world, largely by its own genius and efforts. I venture to say that if the continent is not sidetracked by the blandishments from outside during this transition, if it does not become careless with the strong new wine of national independence, it will in due course make an enormous and unique contribution to the progress of mankind and to peace.

I should note in this connection that with the political transition in Africa, the composition of the United Nations General Assembly is changing in a fashion which assures a decisive voice to the Afro-Asian nations. As you know, it is in the General Assembly that expression is given to world-wide aspirations. We can hope that the Afro-Asian nations and this nation will more and more see the problems of peace and freedom in similar perspective and that their voice will be raised in harmony with our own. That is, however, by no means a certainty. If much depends on the manner in which the African nations develop and use their newly achieved freedom, much also depends on the wisdom and the sensitivity of the policies of the older free nations towards the changes which are taking place in the emergent African continent.

Much closer to home are the problems of peace in Latin America. Notwithstanding the President's recent goodwill tour we are still faced with the need for harmonization of Latin American interests with our own.

Beneath the facade of Hemispheric unity there are deep divisions and much dissatisfaction particularly in economic matters. Fortunately, the present state of our relations with Cuba is not typical of our Latin American relations. But, then, neither was the very warm welcome extended to President Eisenhower in any way typical. As a man of goodwill, Mr. Eisenhower invariably evokes a response of goodwill. A firm basis for sound relations, however, is not conjured up out of ceremonial journeys of less than two-weeks duration. Such journeys may open doors but the problem of keeping them open is one of follow-through in policies.

It seems to me that the need now in inter-American relations is a broad movement forward to new and higher grounds of hemispheric understanding and cooperation. We need this development in inter-American education and cultural exchange no less than in defense. We need it in economic matters no less than in political questions. And if our great neighbor to the North, Canada, is so inclined, we should welcome its participation in any and all matters of Hemispheric interest. Unless this movement forward begins soon and in earnest, I am afraid we may anticipate in this hemisphere whose solidarity is an essential of peace, at worst, more sharp clashes in the present Cuban pattern and at best, a steady erosion of hemispheric intimacy which will increasingly drain inter-American ideals of their substance.

Turning next to Europe, we find there, too, an illusion of peace which masks deep and dangerous divisions. That is particularly the case in Germany but it is also true of the entire continent which is split assunder by the ideological cleavage. Across the chasm only rickety bridges of contact are maintained.

If there is a need for progress towards unity in the divided countries of Asia, there is a compelling need for progress towards unification in Germany and for a growing reconciliation between Eastern and Western Europe.

Until recently, at least, our policies on Europe had remained unchanged in essentials for a decade. We have been engaged in a vast holding action in the fear that the Russians might attack Western Europe, a fear which was inter-mingled with the hope that sooner or later the Russians would withdraw from Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe. To that end, we spent billions to rearm Western Europe and to maintain our forces in that region. The Russians, similarly, have engaged in a vast holding action--an action in the expectation that Western European freedom would fall prey to communism and an action to hold on to a dominance in Eastern Europe which they had obtained in consequence of World War II. To that end they have kept military forces in the Eastern European nations and rearmed those nations and, until the advent of Mr. Khrushchev, minimized contacts between East and West.

It is increasingly clear that these policies have not led to the achievement of the aims of the one side or the other. The communist grip shows no signs of weakening in Eastern Europe and freedom has come back with great vitality in Western Europe.

Certainly, the policies now pursued have not led to peace. They have been, on both sides, holding actions which have produced, at best, an unstable truce based upon a Germany split inside the larger split of Europe. That the truce is highly unstable was indicated by the first German crisis last year. This crisis arose out of the mere announcement that the Russians intended to change one factor in the situation; that is, to withdraw from Berlin and the routes of access to the city in favor of the East German communists. It is ironic that a Russian announcement of a withdrawal, of all things, should produce a crisis; yet it did so, for the move threatened to upset the present delicate balance which depends, with equal irony, on the continued Russian presence in Eastern Germany.

In the round of goodwill tours and conferences, the Russians were persuaded to remain a while longer in Berlin and Germany and the crisis eased. The source of crisis, however, remains in the outdated policies of both sides in Europe. In short, the tours and conferences have served as safety valves but I need hardly emphasize the danger of relying indefinitely on safety valves. Sooner or later, it will be necessary to come to grips in a practical fashion with the problems of a divided

Germany and a divided Europe. The visiting back and forth, notwithstanding, the promise of peace will be illusory until the divisions in Germany and Europe begin to close in peace on the basis of policies attuned to today's realities rather than yesterday's expectations.

In the same fashion, the problem of control of armaments--armaments of massive destruction in particular--must begin to yield to tangible solution before we can talk of peace in any meaningful fashion. We have watched the mathematical progression in the development of the megaton-power of these weapons since the end of World War II. The Russians, the British, no less than ourselves, have advanced from a capability of destroying cities to a capability of destroying nations, to a capability of destroying civilization. The number of nations able to produce such weapons has increased from 1 in 1945 to 4 in 1960 and is subject to further increase if other countries who have the capacity decide so to deploy their science, technology and energy. The missiles of delivery have improved, from the crude but destructive V-Bombs which carried devastation to London in the closing days of World War II to those which encircle the moon and the sun in 1960.

All the while the wisest humans among us, the most compassionate humans among us have warned the world of what it is about in this deadly race for greater and more certain means of human annihilation. All the

while, there have been disarmament conferences in which these words of the wise have been echoed with a remarkable unanimity by all nations. Yet a decade and a half has passed and we have yet to achieve a single agreement, signed and sealed, for the control of armaments. I do not wish to minimize the difficulties involved in this process but surely there is something amiss, something illusory when all endorse the warnings of wisdom, when all agree on the extent of the danger to all and yet agreement is not achieved which makes possible even the beginnings of a beginning of substance on this critical problem.

In 1955, I suggested that a summit conference be held on the one question of ending the testing of nuclear weapons. Five years later, we may be on the verge of such a conference. If it can now produce this one achievement it will mark a major, if long-delayed, step forward. Important as it would be, however, this achievement will be but the start of a long road. Until there exists a firm pattern for the progressive extension of international control over armaments we will do well not to speak of peace as prevailing in the world. This pattern, moreover, is not likely to be established until the political differences and divisions which I have been discussing begin also to yield to practical and progressive solution. In this connection, I may be wrong and I hope I am wrong but I see little likelihood that the current session of the disarmament conference in Geneva, anymore than its innumerable predecessors, will lead to any agreement of substance.

If I may summarize, then, let me say that the United States has made, in the past decade, a vast international effort. That effort has helped to keep open the prospect for peace but it has not yet begun to produce conditions of peace in any significant degree. In no single instance is this more evident than in foreign aid. We have made available for such purposes, funds approaching \$100 billion since the end of World War II. The great bulk of this aid has gone to restore the damages of war or to hold by military means existing situations against deterioration. The positive aspect of aid as it is currently expressed in the Point Four Program of technical cooperation and in loans for modern development has a relatively small part of the total aid-program ever since the Marshall Plan came to a successful termination. In the current year, for example, the President has requested \$4.1 billion for foreign aid. Of this total, however, only \$200 million is for Point 4 aid and \$700 million for development loans. By contrast \$2 billion is for military aid and \$700 million for military-related defense support.

In short, we will do well to recognize still another illusion in our policies; namely, that the vast amounts of aid now being spent is of a kind which necessarily builds conditions of peace. By far the larger share, as I noted, serves primarily to hold existing situations as they are and only a relatively small proportion goes into the constructive effort which is essential in Asia, Africa and Latin America if we are to have a reliable peace.

Many members of Congress who recognize the importance of foreign aid in the conduct of our foreign relations have been pressing for years to bring about reforms and refinements in this program. We have sought and we will seek again to consolidate fully the functions of the aid-agency with those of the Department of State. We have sought and we will seek again to give added emphasis to economic aid as contrasted with military aid. We have sought and we will seek again to substitute as far as possible long-term loans on easy terms for large grants of aid. We have sought and we will seek again to protect and advance the Point Four concept, that is, the people-to-people type of technical assistance. We have sought and we will seek again to bring about an united aid-effort which draws increasingly on the cooperation of Western Europe and Japan, whose recent progress has been such as to enable them to assume a much larger share of the initiative and the cost of assisting the less-favored nations.

Discriminating changes in any major governmental undertaking such as foreign aid are hard to bring about by action from Congress. We can alter legislation as we have done, or pass new legislation, but in the last analysis, effective change depends even more on the administration which has the responsibility for giving effect to the law. In this connection, I would call to your attention the fact that on two separate occasions in the past Congress voted to abolish the aid-agency and turn its functions over to the Department of State and the Department of Defense. And two times this action was reversed by the Administration which, on each occasion, reconstituted the aid-agency under a different name. Despite such

setbacks, some progress has been made in streamlining and improving the administration of the aid-program but much still remains to be done.

The aid-program is, in many ways, typical of our foreign policies as a whole. The problem of bringing about effective foreign relations lies not so much in new policies and new machinery as it does in sharpening existing policies and refining existing machinery. The absence of clear-cut, attainable objectives and the moribund administration of the aid-program --as a recent Senate study of the program in Viet Nam made clear--are principal weaknesses in foreign aid. So, too, are these factors of weakness in our foreign policy as a whole. I have no desire to minimize the tasks of the President and Secretary of State in these matters. Theirs is an exacting responsibility. Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is a great need to look beyond and to act beyond the expensive holding action in which we are now engaged throughout the world. We need to see anew the facts of the divisions in Asia no less than those in Europe. We need to think anew the costly and ineffective effort merely to keep the situation as it is in the Middle East. We need to recognize fully the defects of the aid-effort in Asia, no less than in an emergent Africa and in Latin America. We need to sharpen the policies by which we deal with these problems, in the hope that the problems may begin to yield to practical solution. In short, we need a new determination and a new approach to foreign relations which will move the nation forward from this costly, lackadaisical and dangerous illusion of peace towards the reality of peace.